Sociology 306a/553a, EPE 337a: Empires and Imperialism

Monday 3:30-5:20 pm
493 College Street, Room 208
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Today, we live in a world of nation states, a world in which each nation has—or aspires to have—its “own” state. Yet this global dominance of the idea of the nation state is of relatively recent provenance. For the most of human history, political power has been organized in forms more complex than the simple formula “one nation/one state.” In this course, we will discuss empires, the institutional manifestation of this complex organization of political power.

Empire, imperialism, colonialism and postcolonialism are concepts frequently evoked in public and academic discourse, mainly to refer to the period of European overseas expansion from the fifteenth century on. One aim of this course is to place this European imperialism and its consequences in a larger comparative context. We will do so by considering the historical predecessors of modern European imperialism in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, as well as “contemporaries” of European empires in other parts of the world. With this foundation, in the second half of the course we will discuss and evaluate representative works drawn from the rich literature on modern imperialism and colonialism.

Requirements and Readings
1) Regular attendance, careful reading of the assigned texts, and engaged participation in class.
2) Abstention from laptop use. While laptops are an indispensable productivity tool, their use in the class room creates a sterile atmosphere with everyone glued to their screen instead of engaging with the discussion. In order to facilitate a more vibrant discussion, you are therefore asked to take notes the old-fashioned way. Please contact me if this is a problem for you and we will work out an alternative solution.
3) Once in the semester, you are required to write and post on the class website by 12 pm on the Friday before the class a short, one- to two-page paper highlighting the most important theoretical and empirical issues raised by the readings assigned for this week. The purpose of the paper is to initiate the in-class discussion.
4) A mid-term paper of approximately 5 pages due by 3 pm, October 26.
5) A term paper of approximately 10-15 pages due by 3 pm on December 11. The questions for the mid-term and term papers will be distributed well in advance before the due date.
The following books are required and are available at the Yale Bookstore (tel. 203-777-8440, http://www.yalebookstore.com), as well as through the numerous internet-based booksellers. In addition, copies will be reserved at the Bass Library.


The rest of the readings will be available through electronic reserves.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 30</td>
<td>Introduction and Course Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>Definitions: Empire, Imperialism</td>
<td>Pagden, Anthony <em>Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500-c. 1800</em>, Chapter 1.</td>
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September 30  American Empires


October 7  European Empire after Rome


October 14  Contiguous Empires in Asia and Europe


October 21  The European Expansion Overseas


RECESS

October 26: MID-TERM PAPER DUE

October 28  The Political Economy of Empires and Imperialism


November 4 Empires as Cultural Phenomena


November 11 Decolonization


November 18 A New Imperial Age?


RECESS

December 2 Final Discussion

December 12: TERM PAPER DUE